Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend claims 1-2, 6, 12 and 17, cancel claims 3-5, 7-11 and 34-64, and add new claims 65-70 as indicated below. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

electronically receiving a request from a customer to predict the content level of at least one component in a feedstuff ~~material~~, wherein the request includes a near infrared reflectance spectrum of the feedstuff ~~material~~ and the component is selected from proteins, total or digestible amino acids, gross or metabolizable energy, total or retained phosphorous, an impurity and a toxin;

comparing the spectrum to a specific database calibration that correlates known content levels of the component in other feedstuff ~~material~~ to known near infrared reflectance spectra specific of the other feedstuff ~~material~~;

predicting the content level of the component; and

electronically reporting the prediction to the customer.

2. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the calibration includes at least one correlation between a known content level of the component determined by *in vivo* measurement and a near infrared reflectance spectra of the feedstuff ~~material~~ containing that component.

Claims 3-5 (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the feedstuff ~~material represented by the spectrum~~ is cereal, corn, soybean cake, oleoproteinaceous flour, animal meal, animal byproduct, fish meal, cereal byproduct, or silage corn.

Claims 7-11 (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the at least one component ~~whose content level is being predicted~~ is total or digestible methionine, lysine, cystine, threonine, tryptophane, valine, isoleucine, phenylalanine, histidine or arginine.

13. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the customer request and prediction report are exchanged on a Web site.

14. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the customer request and prediction report are exchanged by electronic mail.

15. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, which comprises presenting one or more menu options for selection by the customer in making the customer request.

16. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 15, which comprises presenting to the customer menu options for the report format of the prediction report.

17. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 15, which comprises presenting to the customer menu options for the category of <u>feedstuff</u> ~~material~~ represented by the spectrum.

18. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 15, which comprises presenting to the customer menu options for one or more components whose content level is to be predicted.

19. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, which comprises charging a fee to the customer for the prediction report.

20. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 19, wherein the fee is based on an agreement with the customer to submit a certain minimum number of requests within a certain period of time.

21. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 20, wherein the fee is charged on a quarterly basis per year based on an expected number of requests within each quarter.

22. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 21, wherein an additional fee during the year is charged for any number of requests greater than that expected during the year.

23. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 21, wherein a request does not qualify towards meeting the expected number of requests if a prediction error accompanying the prediction for that request exceeds a threshold value.

24. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 21, which comprises discounting fees for individual predictions based on receipt of certain minimum numbers of requests from the customer.

25. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, which comprises reporting the prediction to the customer within 24 hours of the customer request.

26. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, which comprises reporting the prediction to the customer within 10 minutes of the customer request.

27. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the customer request and the prediction report may be exchanged 24 hours a day.

28. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, which comprises opening a customer account for the customer upon receipt of a request of the customer.

29. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, which comprises providing the customer with one or more identity and/or security codes for use by the customer in making a request.

30. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 29, which comprises verifying the one or more identity and/or security codes upon receipt of a request.

31. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, which comprises storing the customer request, fee information, and prediction report of one or more customer requests.

32. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 31, wherein the stored information may be retrieved by the customer upon request.

33. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 32, wherein the stored information may be retrieved by the customer on a Web site.

Claims 34-64 (Canceled)

65. (New) A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising providing a central database with calibrations based on samples taken from geographically diverse regions, wherein the calibrations of the central database comprise the specific database calibration for predicting the content level of the component.

66. (New) A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising providing a central database with calibrations based on materials produced in different seasons of the year, wherein the calibrations of the central database comprise the specific database calibration for predicting the content level of the component.

67. (New) A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising determining that an outlier exists when the prediction of the context level of the component has a degree of error that exceeds a predetermined threshold value.

68. (New) A method as claimed in claim 67, further comprising providing the prediction report to the customer at no cost when the prediction of the content level is determined to be an outlier.

69. (New) A method as claimed in claim 67, further comprising:
presenting, when the prediction of the content level is determined to be an outlier, an offer to the customer to perform a measurement of the content level of the component based on a sample of the feedstuff; and

in response to an acceptance of the offer by the customer, measuring the content level of the component in the sample of the feedstuff and reporting the results of the measurement to the customer.

70. (New) A method as claimed in claim 69, further comprising correlating a near infrared reflectance spectrum of the sample of the feedstuff with the measured content level of component to produce calibration data and adding the calibration data to a central database to enrich the database for handling future customer requests.